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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Food for Old Folks" ... Information from the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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What's the right food for the old folks?

Well...here are some suggestions from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Even when the elderly person is hale and hearty...he's likely to need somewhat fewer calories than he did in his more active years.. That's true of the elderly woman as well as the elderly man. It's a rare individual who continues to use the same energy after middle age. Most older people lead a more sedentary life. As a result...if Grandad continues to eat about the same amount of calories as he did in his more active years...he will put on weight. And the disadvantages of overweight increase with age.

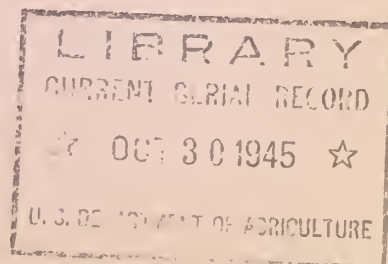
The best way for Grandad to cut down on the calories - say the home economists- is to go light on fats...sweets and starches. Forego rich gravies and desserts in meals. At the same time...remember that some fat is needed in the diet...and sweets in moderation help to make food palatable.

Grandad and Grandmother need fewer calories in their meals...but they need just as many vitamins and minerals as ever. Their meals should include fruits...vegetables...milk and all other different kinds of food that everyone requires.

If you're preparing meals for an elderly person who is sick or disabled...you have more of a problem than cutting down on calories. In general...you'll need to prepare food that's easy to chew and to digest.

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If the elderly person in your household is not on a doctor's diet...here are some suggestions you may find helpful in preparing meals. Keep in mind these are for the older person who does need some thought taken for his problems of chewing and digestion.

Instead of raw fruits...serve stewed or baked fruits. All kinds of bread and cereals are suitable unless they cause discomfort through faulty chewing.

As a rule...the older person likes soup. That's your tip to vary the flavor and to make the soup as nourishing as possible.

For protein in Grandmother's meals...choose ground meats...flaked fish...eggs...cottage cheese and Cheddar cheese dishes in which the cheese is finely divided.

Instead of serving corn as you may prepare it for other members of the family...make corn pudding for Grandad. Use scraped corn without the skin. The pudding is much easier to chew and digest. Serve tomato juice rather than tomatoes...unless the seeds and skins are strained out. When you serve squash...remove the seed.

High seasonings and condiments are likely to be irritating. Greasy gravies and sauce put a burden on a weak digestive system. So count them out when you season dishes for the elderly person.

Good desserts are custards...rice puddings...junkets...gelatin and ice cream.

See that the elderly member of your household eats three meals regularly each day. Then...if you can manage it...supplement the meals with a cup of tea or broth in the afternoon...and a glass of hot milk at bedtime.

A good rule for comfort in declining years...say the home economists...is to eat oftener but eat less at a time. Regular meals though...not nibbling! Many elderly people prefer their principal meal at noon or early evening.

